WEIRD WORLDS

pdc

AUGUST
1971
50¢

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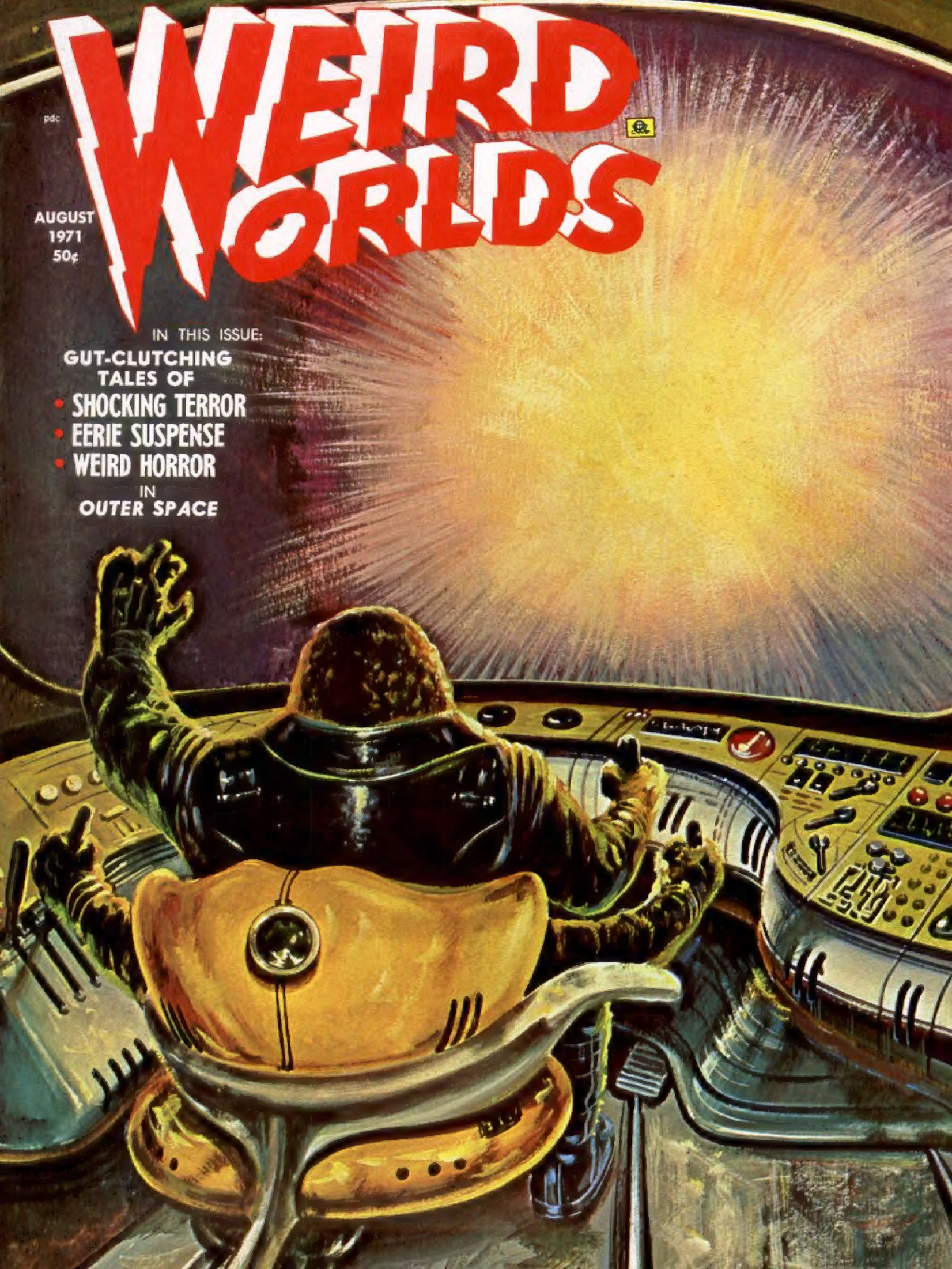
GUT-CLUTCHING
TALES OF

- SHOCKING TERROR
- EERIE SUSPENSE
- WEIRD HORROR

IN
OUTER SPACE



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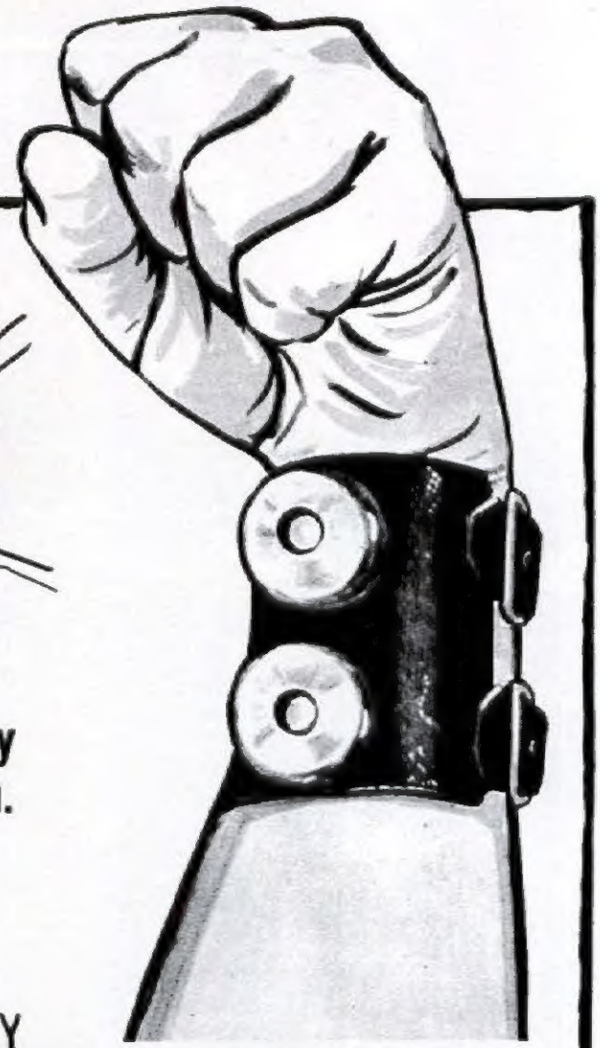

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WEIRD WORLDS

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CARL BURGOS, Editor IRVING FASS, Art Director
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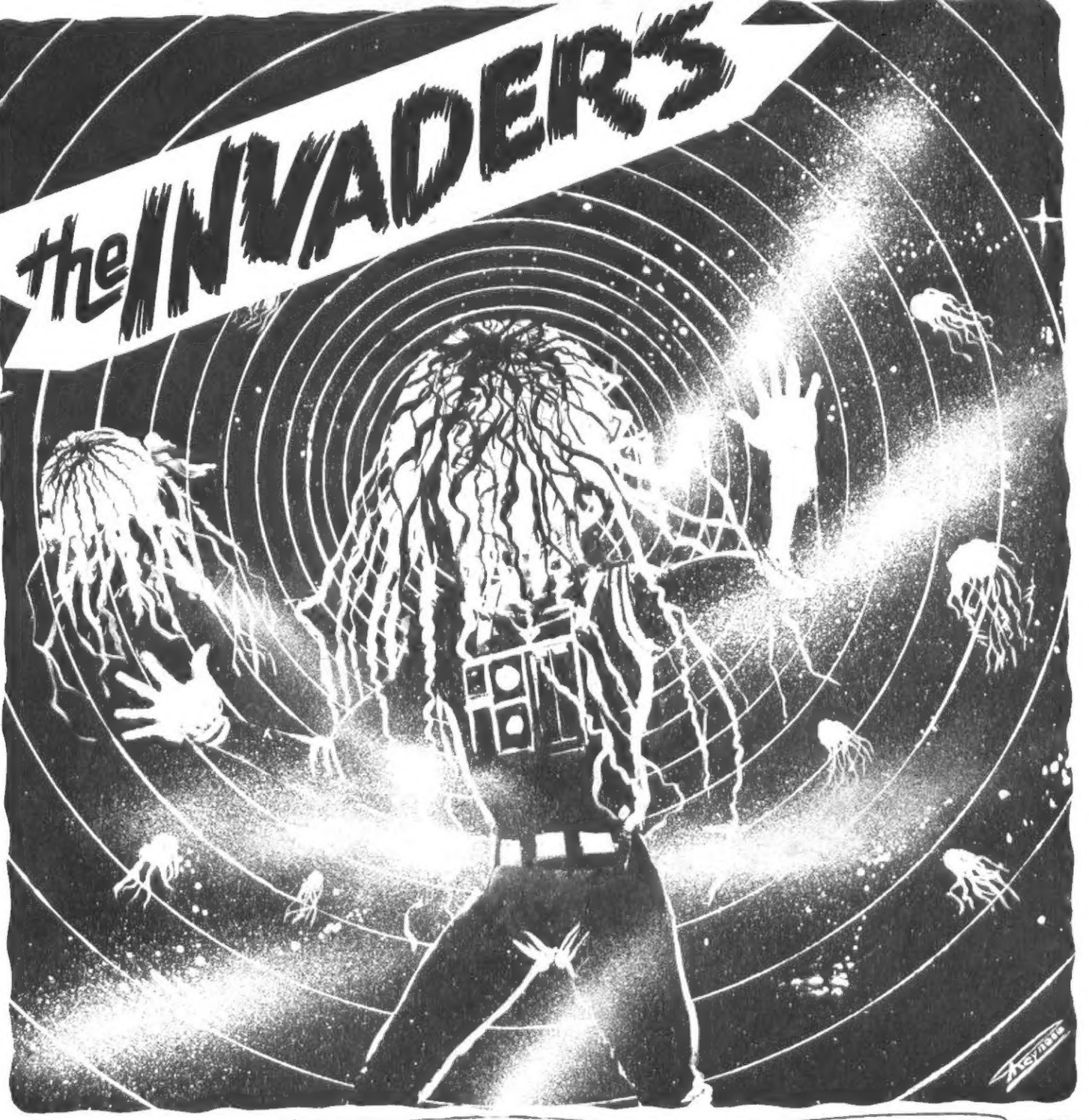
the INVADERS



HELO, EARTH... THIS IS SPACE STATION 27-B, REPORTING... COME IN, EARTH... COME IN!

LOOK, TOD...ON THE RADAR-VIEWER! A SHIP'S COMING IN FOR A LANDING! MUST BE OUR RELIEF! IT'S GOT TO BE!
CM

THE MEN WATCHED THE SHIP LEVEL OUT FOR A LANDING, BUT THEIR HOPES TURN TO HORROR AS THE JETS SUDDENLY GAVE WAY AND THE CRAFT NOSED IN OUT OF CONTROL..

KEEP WORKING THAT RADIO, I'M GOING OUT TO THE SHIP! MAYBE SOMEONE'S STILL ALIVE!

DOESN'T LOOK LIKE ONE OF OURS! HEY... THOSE THINGS DRIFTING OUT OF THE WRECK...

YUGGH! KEEP AWAY! I'LL BLAST YOU IF YOU COME ANY CLOSER!

BUT THERE WERE TOO MANY OF THEM TO FIGHT OFF! IN DESPERATION, TOD TURNED AND RACED FOR THE SPACE STATION...

...IT WAS NO USE! IN A FEW MOMENTS THE STRUGGLE WAS OVER AND THE EARTHMAN WAS A PRISONER!
AARRGHH!

THE THINGS MADE HIM A PRISONER... SOME STRANGE FORCE WAS SHAPING HIS WILL TO DO THEIR BIDDING AND FORCED HIM TO LEAD THEM BACK TO THE SPACE STATION WHERE AN UNSUSPECTING BILL LAWRENCE WAS WAITING FOR THE RETURN OF HIS BUDDY!
WONDER WHAT'S KEEPING TOD? COULDN'T HAVE RUN INTO ANY TROUBLE! THIS ASTEROID IS UNINHABITED!

THEN, THERE WAS A KNOCK ON THE DOOR AND WHEN BILL OPENED IT...
WHAT IN THE WORLD... NO! IT CAN'T BE...

TOD! WHAT'S HAPPENED TO YOU?
MY MIND HAS BEEN TAKEN OVER BY THESE SUPERIOR BRAINS! THEY CONTROL MY WILL POWER AND I'M FORCED TO DO THEIR BIDDING!

REACTING QUICKLY, BILL STEPPED BACK INTO THE SPACE STATION AND LOCKED THE HEAVY STEEL BARRIER! FOR THE MOMENT HE WAS SAFE!
POOR TOD! I'VE GOT TO FIGURE A WAY OUT OF THIS... THERE MUST BE A WAY OUT!

I HAVE READ YOUR MIND, AND THERE IS NO WAY OUT! YOU ARE DOOMED! THIS IS THE FIRST STEP IN OUR CONQUERING YOUR PLANET!

BUT HOW DO YOU EXPECT TO LEAVE HERE? YOUR SHIP IS WRECKED AND IT'S THE ONLY MEANS OF FLIGHT!

WE HAVE THOUGHT OF THAT, TOO! BUT I CAN'T EXPLAIN IT TO YOU UNTIL WE HAVE TAKEN OVER YOUR MIND! DO YOU SURRENDER?

NEVER! I'LL NEVER GIVE IN!

THAT NOISE! THEY'RE USING A HEAT-GUN!

BILL WATCHED IN TERROR AS THE BULKHEAD BEGAN TO GLOW WITH HEAT...

...THEN THEY WERE THROUGH AS THE PLATES BUCKLED UNDER THE INTENSE PRESSURE!

THERE WAS NO STOPPING THEM AS THEY SWARMED THROUGH THE GAPING HOLE...
NO! NO! STAY BACK!

HE STRUGGLED VALIANTLY, BUT THE ODDS WERE TOO GREAT!

IN A FEW MOMENTS THE STRUGGLE WAS OVER...
... AND BILL LAWRENCE FOUND HIMSELF IN THE GRIP OF A STRANGE POWER THAT WAS TO CONTROL HIS EVERY ACTION! HE COULD NOT RESIST! THERE WAS ONLY ONE THOUGHT IN HIS MIND... A HORRIBLE ONE... TO CONQUER EARTH!!

NOW WE CAN STOP THE JAMMING MACHINE! WE MUST CONTACT EARTH!
YES, I'LL TRY THEM AGAIN! HELLO, EARTH... HELLO, EARTH...

HELLO ... STATION 27-B... THIS IS EARTH... YOUR RELIEF SHIP IS ON ITS WAY!
ROGER... WE'LL BE WAITING... OVER AND OUT!

THE TWO MEN LOOKED AT EACH OTHER AND NODDED! THE FIRST STEP OF THEIR MISSION WAS NOW COMPLETED! THEY WERE GOING HOME... TO LEAD THE CONQUEST OF EARTH!!!
IVT
ITN
THE END

IN THE 21ST CENTURY AN ICE BREAKER HAD BEEN BLASTING DANGEROUS ICE FLOES TO KEEP THE SEA LANES OPEN TO THE NEWLY DEVELOPED ARTIC REGION, BUT, AS THEY WERE RETURNING TO THEIR BASE THEY SAW SOMETHING...

the STRANGE SPACESHIP

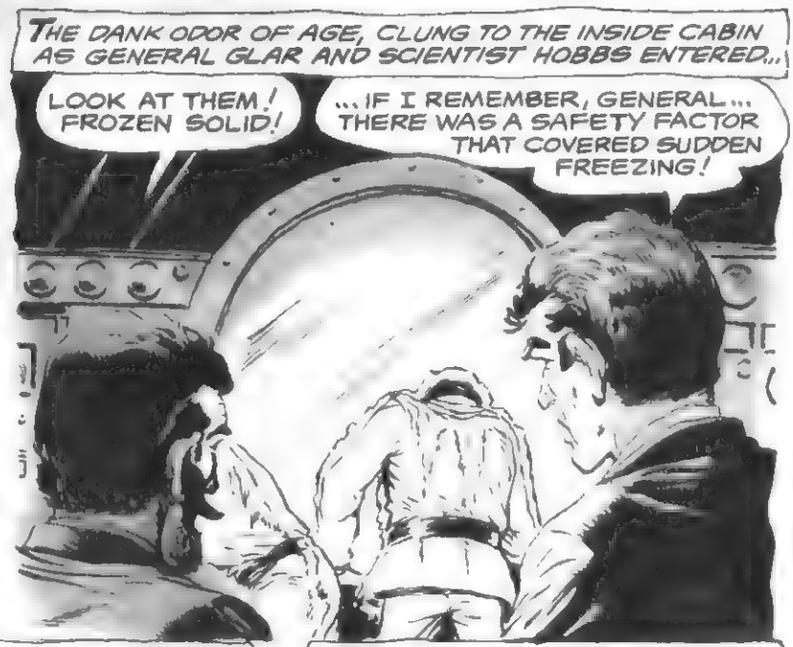
AFTER PROBING THE BERG, THE BREAKER DREW ALONGSIDE...

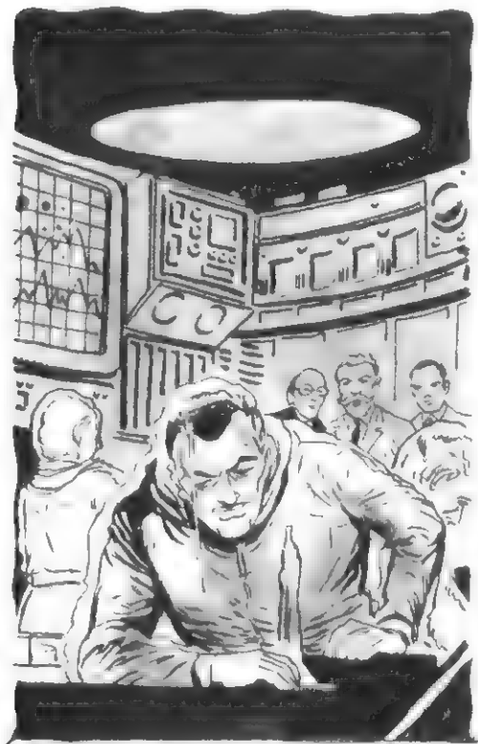
THE CREW, USING TORCHES, AND PICKS CUT INTO THE SOLID MASS!

IN SECONDS, THE ICE SPLIT AND REVEALED THE LOCKED SECRET...

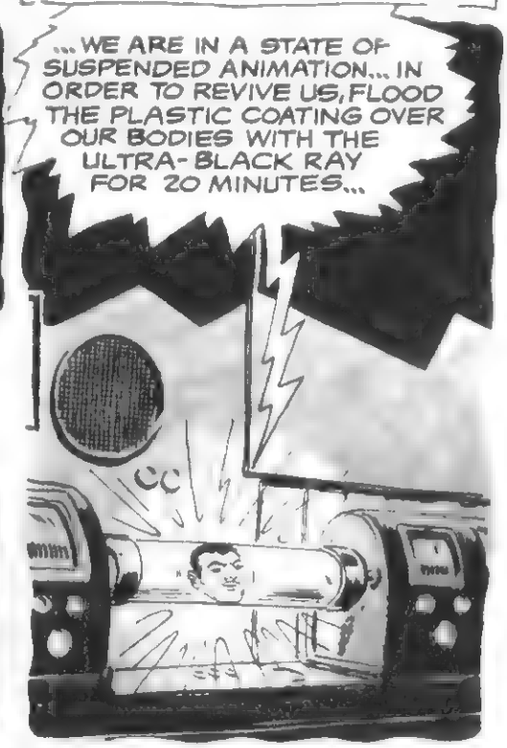
...AS A MATTER OF FACT I WAS NEAR THE LAUNCH PAD WHEN IT TOOK OFF... I EVEN REMEMBER THE SPEECH--
AS YOUR LEADER, I SHALL EXPECT LOYALTY AND OBEDIENCE FROM ALL OF YOU!
THIS IS A ROUTINE MISSION, YET IN AN EMERGENCY, I DEMAND YOUR FULLEST COOPERATION... THAT IS ALL! NOW BOARD AND WAIT FOR THE COUNTDOWN!
...REPORTS APPEARED IN THE NEWS MEDIA... ALL WAS WELL THERE WAS NO ALARM, THE VOYAGE WAS PREPARED TO STAY ALOFT FOR YEARS...
THEN CAME THE REPORT! THEY LANDED ON A STRANGE ASTEROID WITH WILD AND TWISTED JUNGLE... WHILE ON EARTH, NATIONS STARTED A WAR--
...AN ATOMIC WAR BLASTED EARTH AT THAT TIME AND EVERYONE FORGOT ABOUT THE SPACEMEN...
LOOK! IN THE DISTANCE... A BUILDING... OR IS IT A CITY?
THERE'S ONE WAY TO FIND OUT... BUT FIRST WE MUST CALL EARTH!
I'M SORRY, SIR! BUT I CAN'T CONTACT EARTH... AN UNUSUAL AMOUNT OF STATIC IS BLOCKING OUR MESSAGE!
...TOO BAD! BUT THERE'S NO TIME TO WASTE, WE'LL HEAD FOR THE CITY!
AT A COUNCIL OF THE LEADERS, DOORN SOON LEARNED THERE WAS NO HOPE... FOR UNDERSTANDING THAT, THEY CAME IN PEACE...
SLOWLY, THE ASTRONAUTS CUT THRU THE TANGLE OF DENSE JUNGLE VEGETATION, WHEN SUDDENLY...
HEY! WHAT IS THIS? LET GO!
...THROW DOWN YOUR WEAPONS! DON'T FIGHT THEM! WE'LL TAKE OUR CHANCE WITH THEIR LEADERS!
YOU CARRY WEAPONS... YOU ARE WARRIORS!
THEY'VE LEARNED OUR LANGUAGE BY MENTAL TELEPATHY! WE ARE DOOMED!
ED. NOTE: THE ABOVE SEQUENCE WAS BASED ON FRAGMENTARY NOTES IN COMMANDER DOORN'S LOG WHICH ENDED IN A CRUDE AND UNINTELLIGIBLE HANDWRITING!
10

NOW, 18 YEARS AFTER THE LAST INSERT TO THE LOG, THE BREAKER TURNED THE SPACECRAFT OVER TO THE AUTHORITIES!
IT'S THE DOORN SPACE SHIP ALL RIGHT, BUT WHAT WILL WE FIND INSIDE?
THEY'VE OPENED THE HATCH! LET'S GO!

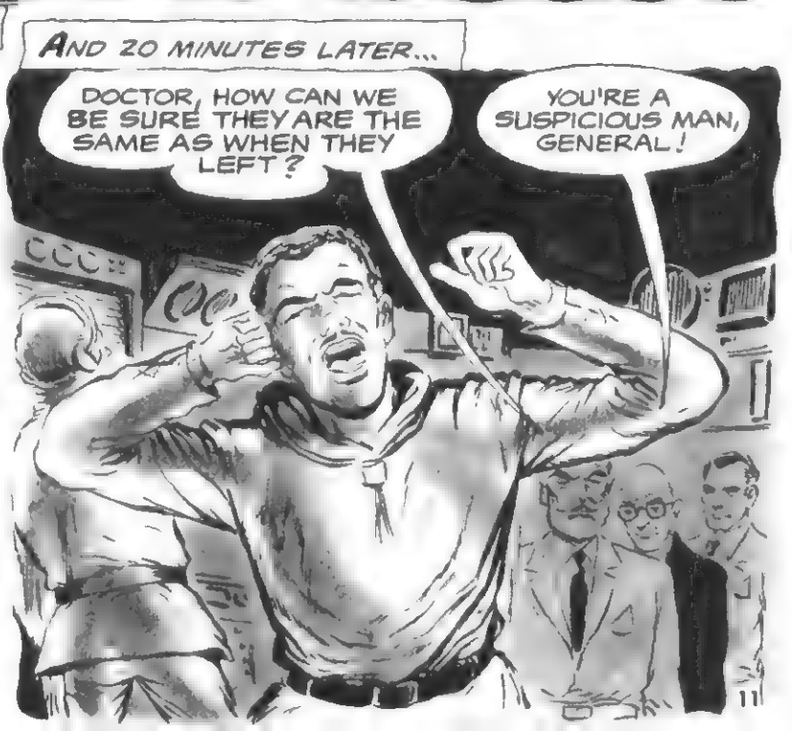

THE DANK ODOR OF AGE, CLUNG TO THE INSIDE CABIN AS GENERAL GLAR AND SCIENTIST HOBBS ENTERED...
LOOK AT THEM! FROZEN SOLID!
...IF I REMEMBER, GENERAL... THERE WAS A SAFETY FACTOR THAT COVERED SUDDEN FREEZING!


YES, EACH MAN WAS AT HIS STATION EXACTLY AS WHEN THEY LEFT ON THEIR FLIGHT...

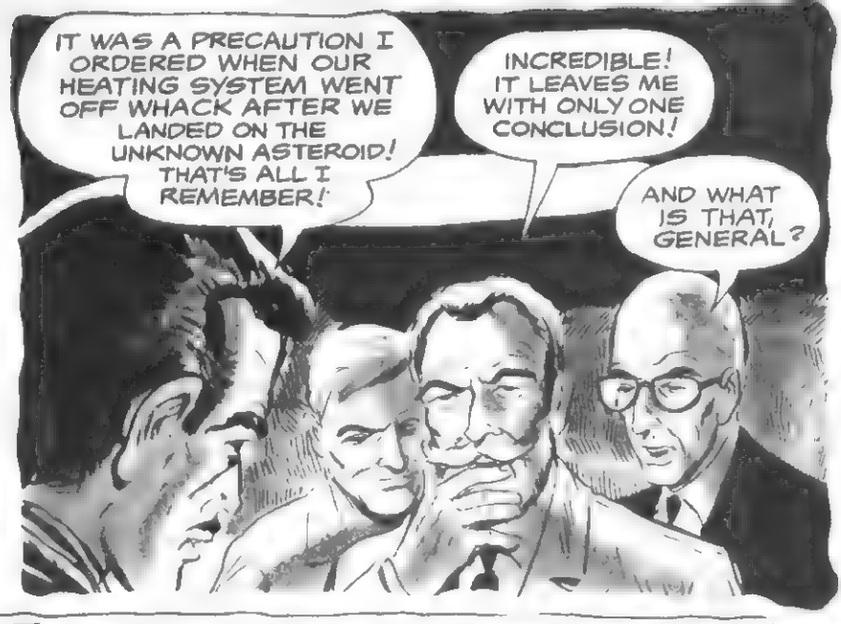
THE GENERAL GAPED AT THE FROZEN MEN, WHILE HOBBS PURSUED A CAREFUL SEARCH WHEN--
THEY'RE JUST LIKE THEY WERE 18 YEARS AGO!
LOOK HERE, GENERAL!
IF THIS SHIP IS FOUND PLEASE TURN LEFT DIAL ON FULL INSTRUCTION. COMM. DOORN


THE DIAL WAS TURNED ON FULL AND THE VOICE OF COMMANDER DOORN WAS HEARD...
...WE ARE IN A STATE OF SUSPENDED ANIMATION... IN ORDER TO REVIVE US, FLOOD THE PLASTIC COATING OVER OUR BODIES WITH THE ULTRA-BLACK RAY FOR 20 MINUTES...

ONLY THE EERIE SOUND OF THE RAY WAS HEARD AS THE PROCESS OF REVIVAL BEGAN...


AND 20 MINUTES LATER...
DOCTOR, HOW CAN WE BE SURE THEY ARE THE SAME AS WHEN THEY LEFT?
YOU'RE A SUSPICIOUS MAN, GENERAL!

IT'S GOOD TO BE BACK AFTER ALL THIS TIME... APPARENTLY WE GOT LOST!
..WHAT?! THAT'S UNUSUAL... HOW DID YOU PLACE YOURSELF IN SUSPENDED ANIMATION?

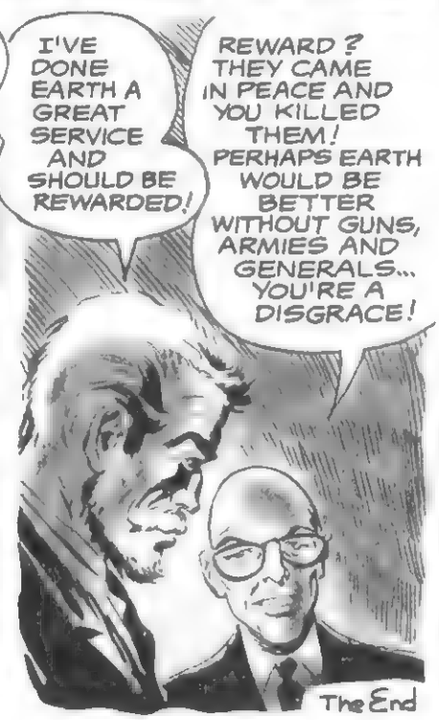

IT WAS A PRECAUTION I ORDERED WHEN OUR HEATING SYSTEM WENT OFF WHACK AFTER WE LANDED ON THE UNKNOWN ASTEROID! THAT'S ALL I REMEMBER!
INCREDIBLE! IT LEAVES ME WITH ONLY ONE CONCLUSION!
AND WHAT IS THAT, GENERAL?

THE ANSWER TO THE DOCTOR'S QUESTION WAS A BLAST OF FLAME FROM A SPACE GUN!
GENERAL! HAVE YOU GONE MAD?
YOU'VE KILLED DOORN!

THE SKIN PEELED FROM THE REMAINDER OF THE CREW AND EXPOSED THE SPACE CREATURES...
WE WANT YOU TO STOP POLLUTING SPACE WITH YOUR ATOMIC WARS!
GENERAL! PUT DOWN YOUR SPACE BLASTER! THEY COME IN PEACE!

... INSTEAD THE GENERAL AND HIS AIDE BLASTED THE CREATURES!
MAKE SURE EVERYONE OF THE BEINGS ARE DESTROYED!
THEY ARE THE ENEMY!

CAN'T YOU SEE, DOCTOR? DOORN'S EXPEDITION MUST HAVE RUN A FOUL WHEN THE LANDED AND THESE THINGS TOOK OVER THEIR BODIES IN AN ATTEMPT TO TAKE OVER EARTH!


I'VE DONE EARTH A GREAT SERVICE AND SHOULD BE REWARDED!
REWARD? THEY CAME IN PEACE AND YOU KILLED THEM! PERHAPS EARTH WOULD BE BETTER WITHOUT GUNS, ARMIES AND GENERALS... YOU'RE A DISGRACE!

The End

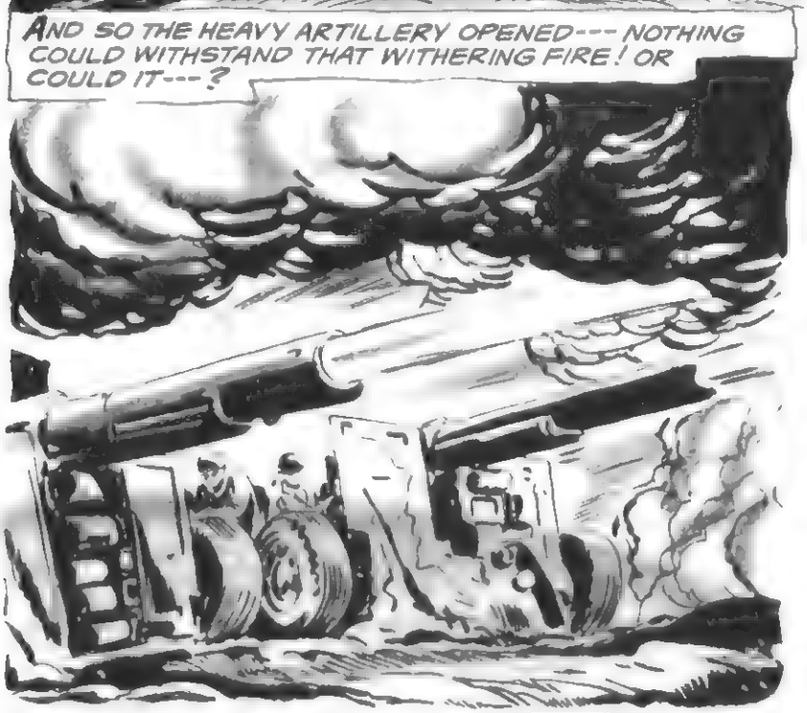
The HORROR ON RADAR

NOT WANTING TO BE CAUGHT UNAWARE, THE GENERAL TOOK THE NECESSARY PRECAUTIONS!
OKAY, LIEUTENANT, MOVE YOUR TANKS UP! DEPLOY THEM AROUND THE ENTIRE AREA!

MORE OF MAN'S INVENTIVE GENIUS WAS TRACKING THE MONSTER'S EVERY MOVEMENT... RADAR! HOW IT POSSIBLY THINK IT COULD OUTSMART THE HUMAN RACE?
I GOT THIS THING ON THE SCOPE AND IT'S GONNA BUST THROUGH THE SURFACE ANY MINUTE! BETTER TELL THE GENERAL TO GET READY!
GOTCHA... HE'S BEEN WAITING FOR THIS MESSAGE ALL DAY!

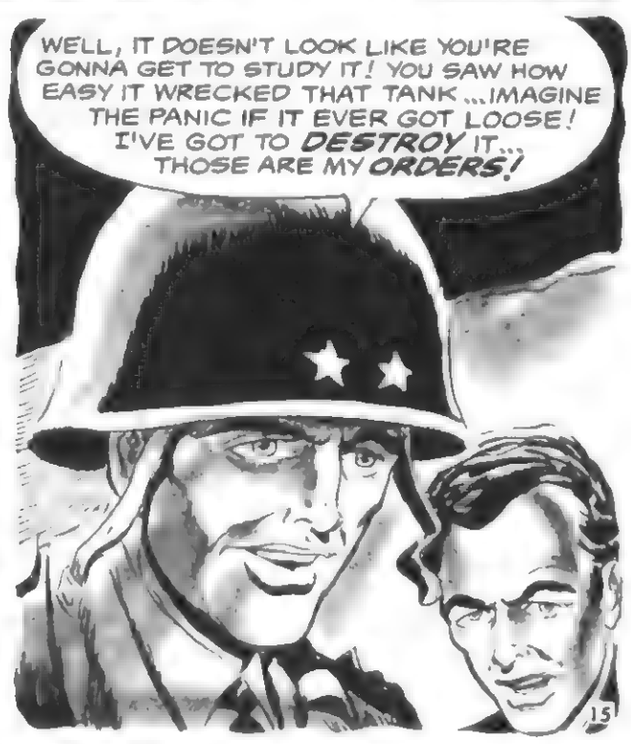
KEEP FIRING! DRIVE THAT THING BACK INTO THAT HOLE!

DRIVE THAT THING BACK... THERE'S NO TELLING WHAT IT'LL DO IF IT GETS LOOSE! FIRE AT POINT-BLANK RANGE!


AND SO THE HEAVY ARTILLERY OPENED--- NOTHING COULD WITHSTAND THAT WITHERING FIRE! OR COULD IT---?

BUT IT WORKED... AT LEAST FOR THE TIME BEING!

WELL WHAT DO YOU MAKE OF IT, DOC? EVER SEE ANYTHING LIKE IT BEFORE?
NEVER! THIS IS THE SCIENTIFIC FIND OF THE CENTURY! I CAN'T WAIT TO EXAMINE IT CLOSER!


WELL, IT DOESN'T LOOK LIKE YOU'RE GONNA GET TO STUDY IT! YOU SAW HOW EASY IT WRECKED THAT TANK ...IMAGINE THE PANIC IF IT EVER GOT LOOSE! I'VE GOT TO DESTROY IT... THOSE ARE MY ORDERS!

AT LEAST WE'VE GOT IT PENNED DOWN... IT'LL GIVE US SOME TIME TO FIGURE OUT WHAT TO DO NEXT!
BUT YOU CAN'T KILL IT! YOU SAW HOW LITTLE EFFECT EVERYTHING HAD ON IT... YOU HAVEN'T GOT A WEAPON WITH WHICH TO DESTROY IT!

IF THE GENERAL COULDN'T FIGURE IT OUT, THERE WERE SMARTER MINDS THAN HIS THAT COULD...
I UNDERSTAND, SIR... YES, SIR... IN ABOUT AN HOUR... OKAY, WE'LL BE READY FOR IT!

LATER...
THERE'S THE TARGET AREA!
BOMB AWAY!

AND SO MAN'S MOST DESTRUCTIVE WEAPON HURTLED EARTHWARD...

...AND EXPLODED RIGHT ON TARGET!

YES, MAN IS CERTAINLY THE RULER OF HIS EARTH. OR IS HE...?
THE END

Witches REVENGE

THE TIME IS RIPE, MY **LOVELIES** -- THE TIME IS RIPE FOR THE LAST OF THE VILE NOONANS TO **FALL** FROM THE FAMILY TREE... AND THAT TREE WILL BEAR NO MORE FRUIT!

HEE-HEEEE!

WE WILL MAKE HIM MOULDER IN THE IRISH EARTH, EH, SATAN?

FOR CENTURIES, THE NOONAN FAMILY IN IRELAND TORTURED AND KILLED US -- BUT THE WEIRD POWERS OF A WITCH HAD TAKEN A TOLL OF THEM, TOO! MANY TIMES HAVE THE CHURCH BELLS TOLLED A NOONAN TO AN EARLY GRAVE! NOW, ONLY MICHAEL NOONAN REMAINS... THE **LAST** OF THAT CURSED BREED OF **WITCH KILLERS**...

...I WILL VANQUISH HIM HORRIBLY..

BOIL AND **BUBBLE**, YE BREWERS OF **TROUBLE**! WE'LL MAKE HIM SUFFER... WE'LL MAKE HIS PAIN **DOUBLE**!!

HEE-HEEEE!

AHH-H... GO **EVIL** ONE... GO SEEK MICHAEL NOONAN IN AMERICA -- BRING HIM TO HIS HOMELAND AND WE'LL GIVE GIVE HIM A **WARM WELCOME**!

HEE-- HEEE!

A SHORT TIME LATER, IN AN AMERICAN COLLEGE...
GOSH... DON'T KNOW WHAT'S THE MATTER WITH ME TONIGHT... CAN'T SEEM TO CONCENTRATE... HMMM, THAT WIND IS LIKE A COLD KNIFE... MUST BE A STORM BREWING...
I... I FEEL SO QUEER... THE WHOLE ROOM... SPINNING! MUST BE STUDYING TOO HARD!
KNOCK!
KNOCK!
KNOCK!
MIKE... WHAT'S THE MATTER? ARE YOU ILL?
YES... YES... I WILL GO... I MUST GO.. BACK TO THE OLD COUNTRY... SOMETHING... SOMEBODY CALLS ME! YES... I'M COMING... COMING...
COMING... COMING...
MIKE! FOR HEAVEN'S SAKE... WHAT IS IT? WHY-- HE'S PASSED OUT... A TERRIBLE SICKNESS HAS COME UPON THE BOY...
HEE-HEEEEEEE!
LOOK, SATAN... THE ENCHANTMENT S WORKING! WE HAVE HIM SPELLBOUND... HE WILL COME! HE'LL MAKE A TASTY LITTLE MOUSE FOR YOUR TEETH AND CLAWS!
EASY, LAD... I'LL GET A DOCTOR FOR YOU...
OHOOOO
HURRY, DOCTOR... THE POOR BOY'S DELIRIOUS; I FELT HIS FOREHEAD AND IT'S HOT! HURRY!
I'M COMING AS FAST AS I CAN!

HE...HE'S RIGHT IN HERE, DOC... OH--HE'S GONE!
(PUFF-PUFF) MY... WHAT A DEVIL OF A MESS... SAY-- (PUFF) IS THIS A COLLEGE STUNT?

HE'S LEFT A NOTE... SAYS... "I MUST GO TO IRELAND--THE LAND OF MY ANCESTORS...DO NOT FOLLOW ME, THOMAS!"
LOOK! LOOK! WHY... THE BOY'S GONE MAD!

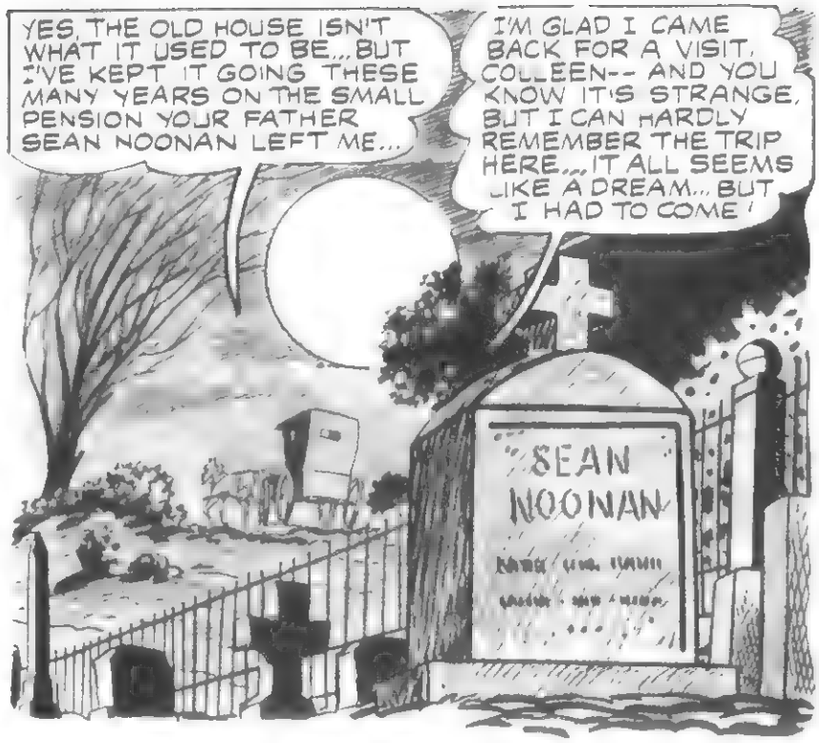
YES, I'M COMING... COMING...
FASTER! FASTER!
MIKE... MIKE COME BACK!
WHO'S THE LAD TALKING TO? THERE'S NO ONE THERE! HE'S MAD!

THAT PASSENGER IN SEAT ONE GIVES ME THE CREEPS! HE HASN'T SAID A WORD OR TAKEN A BITE TO EAT IN HOURS!
I KNOW...I'LL BE GLAD WHEN WE LAND IN DUBLIN, AND WE'RE RID OF HIM! HE'S MADE EVERYONE UNCOMFORTABLE!

I KNEW WHEN MICHAEL NOONAN APPROACHED IRELAND! THE BLOOD IN MY VEINS RAN COLD AS SNAKES, AND IN THE WIND WERE THE EERIE VOICES OF DEAD WITCHES SCREAMING THEIR HATE FROM THEIR ANCIENT GRAVES WHERE THE HATED NOONANS HAD SENT THEM! I WENT TO GREET HIM...
WELCOME, MICHAEL NOONAN...WELCOME TO THE LAND OF YOUR ANCESTORS! I HAVE A CARRIAGE WAITING...
YOU...I REMEMBER YOU...I REMEMBER SOMETHING...YOUR VOICE... FACE...

NOW IT WAS TIME TO BREAK THE ENCHANTMENT! I HAD A MORE HORRIBLE FATE IN STORE FOR MICHAEL NOONAN...HORROR HE WOULD NOT FEEL IN A TRANCE SO...
SNAP!

WHY... WHY... I KNOW YOU! YOU'RE MY OLD NURSE COLLEEN! BUT I THOUGHT YOU WERE DEAD... MANY YEARS AGO!
NO, MICHAEL... YOUR OLD COLLEEN IS STILL ALIVE-- HEH-HEH-HEH!


YES, THE OLD HOUSE ISN'T WHAT IT USED TO BE... BUT I'VE KEPT IT GOING THESE MANY YEARS ON THE SMALL PENSION YOUR FATHER SEAN NOONAN LEFT ME...
I'M GLAD I CAME BACK FOR A VISIT, COLLEEN-- AND YOU KNOW IT'S STRANGE, BUT I CAN HARDLY REMEMBER THE TRIP HERE... IT ALL SEEMS LIKE A DREAM... BUT I HAD TO COME!
SEAN NOONAN

OF COURSE THE FOLKS AROUND HERE SAY THE OLD NOONAN MANOR HOUSE IS HAUNTED-- BUT I'VE BEEN LIVING HERE THESE MANY YEARS SO YOU CAN SEE IT'S NOT TRUE! PEOPLE ARE FOOLS...
CAN'T SAY I BLAME THEM, COLLEEN... THE OLD PLACE HAS GONE TO SEED... IT LOOKS LIKE A ROTTING COFFIN... SOMETHING THAT SHOULD HAVE STAYED BURIED!

HOW DOES THE ROOM LOOK, MICHAEL? OH, YOU MUST MEET SAT-- I MEAN SADIE, MY CAT! SHE'S BEEN MY FRIEND FOR MANY YEARS! COME HERE... SADIE...
I CAN JUST ABOUT REMEMBER IT...

HERE, SA... DIE. THIS IS MICHAEL NOONAN, THE ONE I'VE TOLD YOU ABOUT... OH...
MEOOO WRRR!
OW!! WHY YOU BLACK DEVIL!

I SLIPPED A POTION INTO HIS FOOD THAT NIGHT, AND THEN MICHAEL NOONAN STUMBLED TO BED WEARILY...
SOON YOU'LL FEEL THE ANCIENT FURY OF A WITCH AROUND YOUR NECK... AYE... YOU'LL DANCE A MERRY DANCE ONLY IT WILL BE A DANCE OF DEATH! HEEE-HEEEE!

OH-UH, GOOD MORNING, COLLEEN: GEE, I HAVEN'T SLEPT LIKE THAT FOR YEARS... I SLEPT LIKE A DEAD MAN!
I'VE GOT YOUR BREAKFAST READY, MASTER MICHAEL-- THEN PERHAPS YOU'LL WANT TO WALK TO THE VILLAGE AND SEE HOW IT'S GROWN SINCE YOU LAST SAW IT!

AHHH! HE IS GONE... NOW IS THE TIME TO TRAP HIM! BUT I MUST BE CAREFUL... THE TOWNSPEOPLE DON'T FIND OUT THAT THE OLD HAG OF THE HILLS STILL LIVES!

I KNEW THE AGONY I WOULD HAVE TO SUFFER TO MAKE SUCH A VIOLENT TRANSFORMATION.! I SWALLOWED THE LIQUID FIRE AND IT SEARED MY THROAT HORRIBLY...

AHHH... THE TRANSFORMATION IS ALMOST COMPLETE! MY HANDS ARE SMOOTH AND WHITE... AND BEGUILING... TO LEAD NOONAN INTO THE TRAP... HA-HA-HA-HA!

SOMETIME LATER...
YES, I REMEMBER THE OLD NOONANS... ESPECIALLY YOUR FATHER SEAN! THERE'S A MAN WHO WASN'T AFRAID OF THE DEVIL HIMSELF!
HEY! WHAT'S GOING ON THERE?
TRY TO STEAL MY WALLET, WILL YOU, YOU YOUNG WITCH!
LET ME ALONE! HELP! HELP ME, SOMEONE!

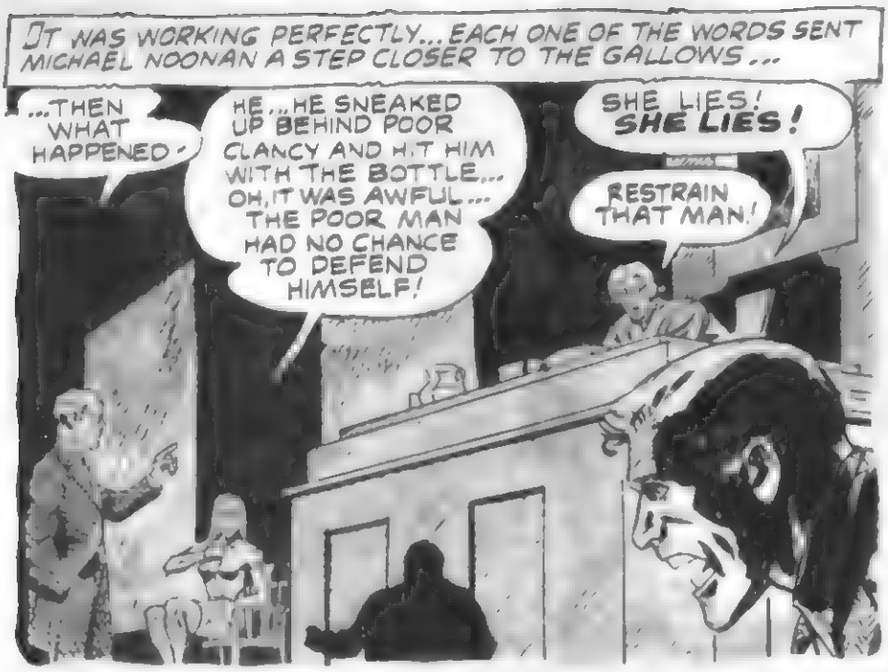
OH, MY POOR WRIST... YOU'VE HURT ME...
LOOK HERE, THAT'S NO WAY TO TREAT HER EVEN IF WHAT YOU SAID IS TRUE!
KEEP OUT OF THIS, LAD... I'M NOT A MAN TO BE THREATENED! GET OUT OF MY WAY!

ALL RIGHT THEN! I'LL HAVE TO TEACH YOU WITH MY FIST!
HE'S ALWAYS TRYING TO GET ME IN TROUBLE JUST BECAUSE I REFUSED TO GO OUT WITH HIM! OH, LOOK OUT!

OH, YOU'VE KILLED HIM!
BE CAREFUL WHEN YOU PICK A FIGHT WITH A NOONAN!

HURRY, STEVE... OH-OH -- TOO LATE...
HE DID IT, OFFICER... OH, IT WAS TERRIBLE... HIT HIM WITH THIS BOTTLE ...LOOK AT THE BLOOD ON IT! POOR FELLOW NEVER HAD A CHANCE!

ALL RIGHT, YOUNG FELLOW -- BETTER COME ALONG WITH ME... AND DON'T GIVE ME ANY TROUBLE! YOU, TOO, LADY!
BUT... BUT...
POOR OLD CLANCY LOOKS DONE FOR, STEVE... THAT WAS A FOUL WAY FOR A NOONAN TO FIGHT -- WITH A BOTTLE ACROSS THE HEAD! THEY'LL HANG YOU!


IT WAS WORKING PERFECTLY... EACH ONE OF THE WORDS SENT MICHAEL NOONAN A STEP CLOSER TO THE GALLOWS...
...THEN WHAT HAPPENED-
HE...HE SNEAKED UP BEHIND POOR CLANCY AND HIT HIM WITH THE BOTTLE... OH, IT WAS AWFUL... THE POOR MAN HAD NO CHANCE TO DEFEND HIMSELF!
SHE LIES! SHE LIES!
RESTRAIN THAT MAN!

MICHAEL NOONAN, IT IS THE DECISION OF THIS COURT THAT YOU ARE GUILTY! ON MARCH 13TH YOU WILL BE HANGED BY THE NECK UNTIL YOU ARE DEAD FOR THE FOUL MURDER YOU HAVE COMMITTED! TAKE HIM AWAY!

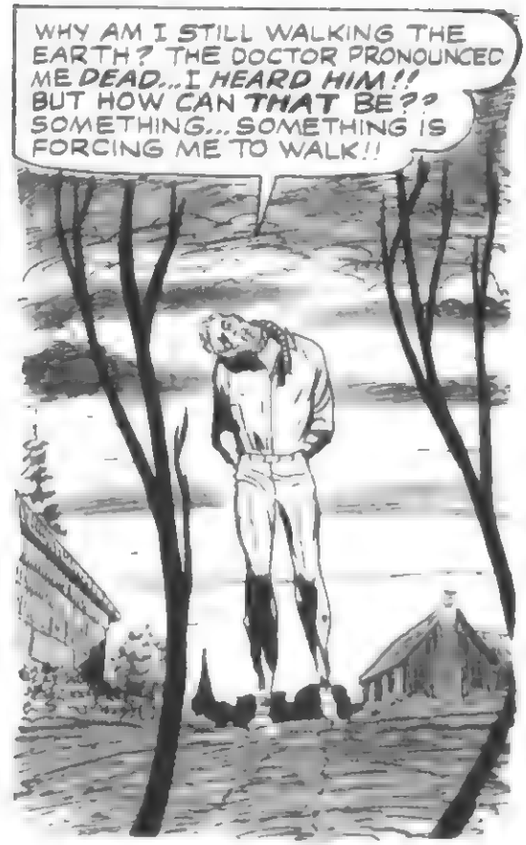
YOU! YOU... YOU WITCH! YOU'VE DONE THIS TO ME BY LYING! WHY? WHY HAVE YOU DONE IT?
YOU'VE GUESSED RIGHT... A WITCH HAS DONE THIS! YOU ARE GOING TO PAY WITH YOUR LIFE FOR ALL THE MISERY THAT YOUR FATHER'S FAMILY HAS BROUGHT TO MY PEOPLE... THE WITCHES OF IRELAND! WE HAVE BEATEN YOU! HAHAHA--HA HA HEE-EE!

BUT MY VENGEANCE WAS NOT COMPLETE...I HAD OTHER PLANS FOR MICHAEL AFTER HE DIED...
THERE HE IS, LADY!
GO AWAY, COLLEEN! I DON'T WANT YOU TO SEE ME HERE!
NEVER MIND, MICHAEL! I BELIEVE IN YOU! HERE, I BROUGHT YOU SOMETHING VERY SPECIAL TO EAT! YOU MUST KEEP YOUR STRENGTH UP!

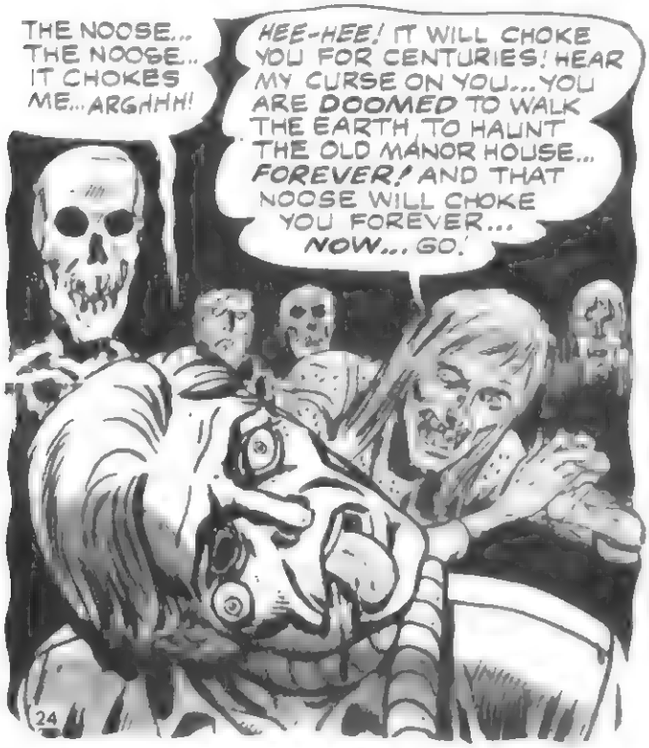
...THE DAY OF THE HANGING CAME...
FOR THE LAST TIME I TELL YOU I'M INNOCENT! I KILLED HIM IN SELF-DEFENSE! IT WAS AN ACCIDENT!
PEACE BE WITH YOU, MY SON!

I PRONOUNCE MICHAEL NOONAN DEAD!
GOOD RIDDANCE!
LET HIM HANG UNTIL HIS COFFIN IS READY!

BUT SEVERAL HOURS LATER WHEN THE GUARD CAME TO CUT HIM DOWN...
SAINTS PRESERVE US... HE'S... HE-- HE'S GONE!


WHY AM I STILL WALKING THE EARTH? THE DOCTOR PRONOUNCED ME DEAD... I HEARD HIM!! BUT HOW CAN THAT BE?? SOMETHING... SOMETHING IS FORCING ME TO WALK!!

WHY AM I HERE?
WELCOME, MICHAEL NOONAN... WE HAVE BEEN WAITING FOR YOU, MY FRIENDS AND I! THEY LIKE YOU ARE DOOMED AND CURSED AND MUST WALK THE EARTH UNTIL THE END OF TIME OR UNTIL I RELEASE THEM AND I NEVER WILL.
YOU CAN SEE HOW EACH ONE OF THEM DIED! LIKE YOU... THEY'RE MY ENEMIES!


THE NOOSE... THE NOOSE... IT CHOKES ME... ARGHHH!
HEE-HEE! IT WILL CHOKE YOU FOR CENTURIES! HEAR MY CURSE ON YOU... YOU ARE DOOMED TO WALK THE EARTH, TO HAUNT THE OLD MANOR HOUSE... FOREVER! AND THAT NOOSE WILL CHOKE YOU FOREVER... NOW... GO!

BUT SEVERAL MONTHS LATER...
MIKE NOONAN... MIKE NOONAN...
MIKE NOONAN!

MIKE! IT IS YOU! WH- WHAT HAS HAPPENED TO YOU?
THOMAS...THOMAS, MY FRIEND...YOU ARE TALKING TO A DEAD MAN...ONLY THE RESTLESS, DOOMED SPIRIT OF MIKE NOONAN SPEAKS!

AND THAT'S MY STORY, THOMAS... DOOMED... DOOMED...
IT...IT'S INCREDIBLE! BUT I'M GLAD I CAME LOOKING FOR YOU--THERE MUST BE SOME WAY I CAN HELP YOU...EH! WHAT WAS THAT?
HEE--HEEE! LISTEN TO THE FOOLISH MORTAL, SATAN!

LISTEN, EVIL ONE! IN THE NAME OF THE GOOD BOOK I DEMAND YOU RELEASE MICHAEL NOONAN FROM YOUR UNJUST CURSE! SPEAK!
NO...NO! COME NO CLOSER TO ME! YOU MUST HANG HIM... HANG HIM...

KEEP BACK... KEEP BACK KEEP BAAAHHHH!
PEACE BE WITH YOU, EVIL ONE! MAY THERE BE MERCY EVEN FOR YOU!

DO NOT GRIEVE, THOMAS! I AM BODILY DEAD...IT IS MY SPIRIT WHICH YOU MUST HELP ME LAY AT REST! I AM WEARY, THOMAS...WEARY! NOW YOU MUST HELP ME DO THE DEED...GOODBYE...

GOODBYE, OLD FRIEND...
THE END

INNERSPACE

MIST LAY ON THE GROUND AS OPAQUE as a solid substance and at a height level with my chest. I crept through the mist with my shoulders hunched, the knife ready in my hand.

Cacillia had ordered me to kill again tonight. I would kill for her although every fiber of my heart, mind and soul would be sickened by the killing. Afterwards—I would be gripped be a coldness that reached my bones I would tremble violently with the chill of memory and I would feel as dead as the prey.

It had been several minutes since I had stopped to check my bearings so I stopped and

listened
carefully
totally

for sound in the mist is the most important of all. The long green snakes crawl unseen through the mist, they travel in small herds as animals of the plains or as schools of fish and you must listen for them in the valley where the mist is so thick because if you do not you may suddenly find yourself walking on them. They will be everywhere beneath your feet writhing as living but death-giving grass and you will feel their poisonous forked tongues and fangs. You *can* hear them. If you stand absolutely still in the mist with every ounce of your body and mind tuned to your ears, you can hear them in the distance as a sad muted hissing much like a mournful sighing.

You can tell if the sound is growing stronger. If it is coming closer, then you must move quickly either to the left or right. Stop. Listen again. The snakes in a herd, are never more than a few yards in diameter. In the blindness of the mist if you hear their sighing growing fainter, you will know they have passed.

I listened for the other dangers. The Lebbok, giant turtle more than five feet tall, is as deadly as the snakes. The Lebbok manner of giving death is not as slow and painful as the one from the snakes, it is a sharp quick bite of its mouths—huge enough to cut a man in half.

The bees can be heard in the mist. If a man meets one of their swarms, it is not always a promise of death. Sometimes a man will live for days or weeks or months with his flesh achingly swollen and itching from their thousands of stings . . . a man may live but until fully recovered, may pray for death.

Cacillia had instructed me, so I listened carefully. From far on the other side of the valley came the heavy hard scraping sound of a Lebbok.

Nearer much nearer the deep thump thump heartbeat of a huge Gargon.

I straightened—raising until my eyes were only an inch above the top layer of mist. I saw the Gargon and turned straight in that direction. The surface of the mist was shaped as the rolling waves of a sea, but a frozen sea, for there was no movement on the gray surface. I sank beneath the mist again. *A periscope, I thought. Much like a periscope—my head and eyes. The submarine—my body. And I travel in a sea of horror.*

Twice during the journey to the Gargon I stopped and listened. I heard some of the snakes once but, as I remained still the sound died and faded completely.

The thump thump of the Gargon's heart grew in the gray misty blindness. I felt the heartbeat through the soles of my shoes, his heartbeat reverberating through the ground, it was chillingly like walking on the beast's heart.

I stopped again and peered above the mist to see my prey's exact location.

I saw:

Only a few yards away, the giant back of the Gargon rising more than two dozen feet above the still mist.

I crept closer and found the neck.

The vein.

Pulsing.

So regular in sleep.

I raised the knife . . .

And slashed the huge jugular.

The warm blood poured on me by the bucketsful—and my scream of horror at my own deed was lost in the deathscream of the Gargon. It raised on its huge feet—more tremendous than an elephant—and crashed to the ground.

Sleep, a voice in me cried. *Sleep again, sleep forever.*

I could hear the great beast kicking and twitching. I felt tears on my cheeks and ran through the mist, holding tight to the knife so covered with blood—my hand so covered with blood. Once I had dropped one of the knives after slaying a Gargon—lost it somewhere in the mist, never to be found again. I HAD RETURNED TO Cacillia with my triumphant news of death but she had frowned and said, "Where is the knife?"

"I lost it."

"You fool!"

Her eyes had flashed with fire and her beautiful face had turned ugly.

Cacillia had seized a whip from the ring in the stone wall and said, "Now you must learn the value of a knife."

Pain . . . That was the pain-filled night that Cacillia taught me all the different kinds of pain. I will never forget.

And will never drop another of the pearl-handled knives . . .

The Gargon's blood had drenched my right side—from my shoulder to my foot. The stench of the warm blood hung as a cloud and, as I paused to listen again for some sign of danger, the stench of blood came strong from my clothes.

I heard a rustling of water and crawled in that direction—the smell of the huge beast's death clutching my stomach . . .

"I have to clean away the blood," I whispered. "I killed it but only because I *had* to kill it. I will not lose another knife. Cacillia will be waiting. I must hurry with washing the blood away and—"

"Wake up, Erik." May's voice. I felt her soft hand on my shoulder, gently rocking me.

A part of my mind did not know May, that part whispered through my lips, "I have killed a dozen. I am sick with the killing and the blood but I must go on killing them because Cacillia is so beautiful, I must have her and she has said she will be mine if I kill all the Gargons in the valley. The bad part is the first bite of the knife into the jugular vein, the first splash of blood. Their heads are so large you have to reach high to cut the vein. And you have to stand close. When you are sure the blade has sliced through the flesh and tissue

of the vein, you must turn quickly and run. If you do not—"

"Wake up, Erik. Stop mumbling, will you?"

"—the blood will fall over you like a waterfall."

"Erik!"

"—waterfall waterfall a waterfall a—"

I sat up in bed with my throat straining to scream. I had been caught in the waterfall of blood twice—enough to cause a hundred nightmares. But I saw our bedroom. May smiled at me as she turned her head on the pillow.

"You're a dreamer," she said. She yawned.

"Gargons. They're larger than elephants. You have to kill them while they sleep. They—" I ran a trembling hand across my face.

"Did you say elephants? Were you dreaming about elephants honey?"

"I had a knife. I have to—"

"You had a *what?*" May shifted her legs beneath the blankets. She yawned again.

Invisible clicking in my skull. The last of sleep fading. The maximum consciousness returned. I said, "Was I talking in my sleep?"

"You certainly were."

"What did I say?"

She closed her eyes. Moonlight bathed her lovely face. "You mumbled so much . . ."

"You didn't *hear?*"

"Didn't understand." She sighed sleepily.

"I'm sorry if I woke you up."

"S'allright. But, if you're having trouble sleeping, why don't you take one of those pills?"

I shuffled through our darkened house. Kitchen table, chairs. Faucet drip-dripping, cold methodical lonely sound in the sink, but a very real sound.

My footsteps shuffle across the floor . . .

Nightlights in most rooms.

Sofa, TV, lamps, bookcase, yesterday's newspaper. I see them and I try to think they are real but I know I could be in the valley of Gargons, asleep, dreaming all this.

I open the medicine cabinet in the bathroom.

Sleeping pills.

One.

Glass of water.

I shuffle toward the bedroom and pause by the front door to peer out at the world.

Rows and rows of houses all very similar to the one May and I live in—sleep in—dream in. Yards are different. Some trees planted. Shrubs. Houses positioned in various directions. A light in a window two house-rows distant. Someone else having a nightmare?

In bed again, I feel sleep coming, darkness growing . . .

Cacillia sits before me. In a filmy gown as white and revealing as a curtain of snowflakes, she is the most beautiful woman in the world, she is enough to drive men mad . . . or drive them to murder. When I look at her, I feel my lust rising for her body like an irresistible tide. I want her more than anyone or anything I have ever wanted before.

I listen to the roar of the black waterfall near the hut. A steady sound, soothing, hypnotic . . .

"Here is the knife." Cacillia has crossed the hut again, placing the knife in my hand.

I watch as she returns to her chair. I say, "You've never explained . . . Is this another world, a physical world I travel to when asleep? Or is this place in my imagination?" *Nightmare!* my mind corrected.

"Does it matter? You have made your decision." She smiled. "You agreed. You will have me after you have killed all the Gargons in the valley."

Yes. I held the knife in one hand and ran fingers of my other hand along the cold blade. Smooth. Hard. Real. This was a *real* world—lightyears away and reached by unconscious teleportation and transmutation of matter—or—reached by a sleeping-dreaming mind. The method did not matter. It was real enough, everything in it as real as May and our house on Earth.

"I guess you're right. It doesn't matter. Everything here is so real . . ." *She* would be *very* real to me after I paid the price!

With the knife in my hand, I opened the door. The mist swirled beyond the doorway . . .

"You promised to kill all the Gargons in the valley," Cacillia

reminded me. "I have ways to hold you to that promise."

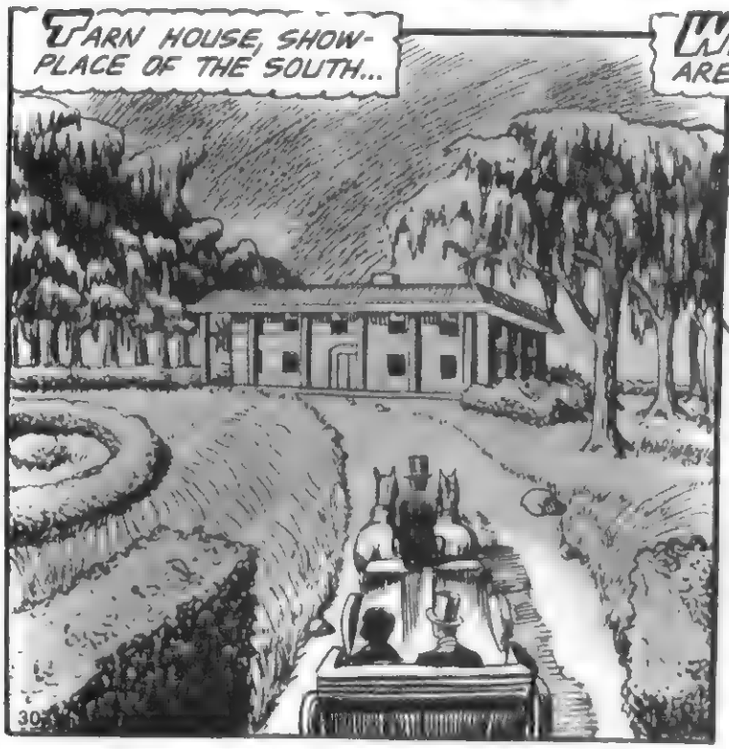
I had hesitated at the door because of memory of the horror of killing the huge beasts. It took *hours* to find and murder each one . . . so far I had only killed a dozen. Reluctant to step into the mist for the long chilling task of carrying death again, I waited and asked, "How many will I have to kill?"

It had always been impossible to estimate the size of the valley—I had wandered blindly through the mist and navigated to and from Cacillia's hut by the sound of the black waterfall. It had also been impossible to estimate the number of Gargons to be slaughtered.

Cacillia answered and I stepped out into the mist with a scream tearing my throat: I knew I would scream until my throat became raw. Then I would go on and on with the horror of killing the huge Gargons—Cacillia's answer ringing in my ears beneath the sound of my screaming, "TEN thousand." ●

Hands of Terror

ON THE STATELY HOMES OF THE OLD SOUTH THERE WAS GRACE AND BEAUTY—AND ALSO HORRIBLE THINGS THAT CAME IN THE NIGHT! TARN HOUSE WAS SUCH A PLACE! BENEATH THE SURFACE OF THE MOON GILDED LILY POND, FOREVER WAITING, WERE THE PALE HANDS OF TERROR...



EYES, EVIL AS THOSE OF A SPIDER, WATCH THEM FROM THE GREAT HOUSE...
MY COUSIN IS A FOOL! HE THINKS HE'S GOING TO MARRY NATALIE— BUT I KNOW BETTER!
NO ONE WILL EVER HAVE HER BUT ME! I'VE WANTED HER SINCE SHE WAS A CHILD, AND I MEAN TO HAVE HER! EVEN— IF IT TAKES MURDER!
THAT NIGHT THERE IS A BALL...
YOU SAID YOU HAD A SURPRISE, NATALIE! WHAT IS IT?
DON'T BE IMPATIENT, DARLING! YOU'LL SOON KNOW!
AND...
I WANT ALL MY DEAR FRIENDS TO KNOW—VINCENT AND I ARE GETTING MARRIED NEXT MONTH!
DARLING!
WE MUST HAVE A TOAST TO THEM!
BUT IN THE BLACK HEART OF LANCE COX, THERE IS A TOAST OF ANOTHER KIND...
HERE'S TO— DEATH!
THE FOLLOWING NIGHT...
VINCENT SHOULD BE HERE SOON! MY NOTE SAID WE —HAH— HAD SOME VERY IMPORTANT BUSINESS TO DISCUSS!

AH, HERE HE COMES AT LAST! AND NOW...
SORRY, MY DEAR COUSIN! BUT I MUST!
W—WHAT!
YOU SEE THAT— CHUCKLE— LOVE CAN BE FATAL!
GAAAA—
THERE IS THE MATTER OF CHAINS AND WEIGHTS...
THEY'LL NEVER THINK OF LOOKING FOR HIM IN THE LAKE! NOT AFTER I TELL MY STORY!
GOODBYE, VINCENT! I'LL THINK OF YOU — WHEN I'M MARRIED TO NATALIE!

AND NEXT DAY...
I'M SORRY, NATALIE, BUT VINCENT WAS NO GOOD! THERE WAS ANOTHER WOMAN ALL THE TIME! HE'S GONE AWAY WITH HER, AND ASKED ME TO TELL YOU!
NO — I CAN'T BELIEVE IT OF VINCENT! I KNOW HE LOVED ME!
YOU MUST FORGET HIM, MY DEAR! I'LL SEE THAT YOU DO! I'LL ALWAYS TAKE CARE OF YOU!
Y-YOU? I D-DON'T UNDER-STAND!
ARE YOU BLIND, NATALIE? CAN'T YOU SEE THAT I'VE ALWAYS LOVED YOU? I WANT YOU!
NO! PLEASE DON'T...
HE KILLED VINCENT! SOMEHOW I KNOW IT! LANCE DID IT!
THE MURDERER REALIZES HIS MISTAKE TOO LATE...
LEAVE ME ALONE! LET ME OUT OF HERE!
NATALIE! COME BACK, YOU LITTLE FOOL!
SHE KNOWS! I WAS A FOOL TO BE SO HASTY, BUT I CAN MEND MATTERS YET! LUCKY THE SERVANTS ARE GONE TODAY! WE'RE ALL ALONE!

WHILE NATALIE, WEAK WITH TERROR AND EXHAUSTION...
C-CAN'T GO ANY FARTHER! AND HE'S COMING—HE'S GOING TO KILL ME TOO!
SUDDENLY...
OHH—THOSE HANDS! EEEEEEEEEEE-
DON'T BE AFRAID OF ME, DARLING! DON'T YOU SEE? IT'S ME, VINCENT!
V-VINCENT!
NATALIE FAINTS AND...
YES! PERHAPS IT IS BETTER THIS THIS WAY! BEFORE I STILL HAVE WORK TO DO!
SLEEP, MY DEAREST! WHILE I TAKE REVENGE FOR BOTH OF US!
SOON...
AH, HERE HE COMES! I SHALL SEE HOW SWEET REVENGE CAN BE!

YOU! NO—IT CAN'T BE! I'M SEEING THINGS!
YES, COUSIN! YOU ARE SEEING THE MAN YOU MURDERED! HAH-HAH!
D-DON'T! PLEASE— GAAAAA—
HE-HEE— HEEEEE—
AHHHHHHHH—
NO ONE WILL HEAR, COUSIN! YOU PLANNED IT THAT WAY, REMEMBER?
WHEN IT IS OVER...
AND NOW, MY LOVE, WE WILL FIND PEACE TOGETHER!
AND SO THEY SLEPT...
The End

EZRA

THE COSMIC MONSTER

■ Bill was at a dinner party at the Carters when the subject first came up—a dinner to which he would never have gone if he could have thought of a plausible excuse. Sarah Carter had a girl visiting her from the East; her school roommate or something. Bill was her dinner partner. They were talking about some people she didn't like.

"And they told it all over town," she said, "that I was the girl that was caught at the roadhouse, and that I had a red wig on so nobody would know me. Oh how I wish I could get even with them—the most hateful people. Haven't you any suggestions?"

Bill looked pensive. Many martinis had set up a pleasant buzzing in his brain, and everything in life seemed very easy. "You might tell everybody they have a crazy locked-up daughter nobody ever sees, and that's why they don't like young girls."

"Too easy. They have *three* daughters, all crazy, only not locked up. That is, yet."

"In that case, I don't know," said Bill. "Why don't you just leave it to me?"

She looked at him. "What do you mean? Do you make little wax images and stick pins in them?"

Ah! There she had stolen a march on him—because that was just what he was going to say. So he took a piece of celery, applied his mental spurs to himself, and came out in an inspiration.

"Haven't I ever told you about the woman in gray?"

"No! Who is she?"

"Just a woman in gray."

"Well, where is she?"

"She's right here beside me now."

"Where?"

"Oh," said Bill confidently, getting into his stride, "you can't see her, but she's right here by me all the time. I've known her for years."

"Heavens!" exclaimed his partner. "Aren't you scared? Doesn't she hurt you?"

"Oh, no. She *likes* me. That's why she stays here—isn't it, Woman?" He turned and nodded to one side. "Of course, she's very modest and goes out of the room when I'm undressed, but all the rest of the time she's here. Even her face is gray."

"Well," said the girl, making a violent effort to keep the conversation going, "doesn't she do anything at all?"

"Certainly. She gets after people I don't like."

"How terrible! Well, sic her on the Quarrys in Hartford, then. Tell her to do her worst."

"I will, right now . . . Did you hear that, Woman? Hartford, Connecticut; Quarry's the name."

"The third house from the corner on the left," said the girl. "I don't want her to make a mistake."

"She never makes a mistake," said Bill; "and now, I think dinner's over and we can get down to the serious part of the evening."

And that was the last Bill thought about it for two weeks, until Sarah Carter plowed across the room at a cocktail party, and said, "What's this about some Woman in Gray?"

"I don't know," said Bill. "What do you mean?"

"I don't know.

"I had a letter from Elsa. She said to tell you your Woman in Gray did the work a little too well, and that you'd better be careful."

Bill looked thoughtful. "What else did she say?"

"Something about a family named Quarry. They had an automobile accident, and all died—five, I think."

"What a coincidence!" said Bill. "And what a story!"

He lost no time in telling it around, of course. It was a good story, with enough of pleasant actual horror in it, but not too much, the Quarrys remaining mythical; so that it was worth a chill and a laugh any place.

Two weeks later, he was at a dinner at Corinne Gorman's house—a fine, old-fashioned dinner with old-fashioned cocktails before, new-fashioned highballs after, and good old-fashioned screaming all the way through. Bill sat by Corinne; her short boyish hair was circled with a gold band, and she had on a red velvet dress. She turned to him and pointed to two empty seats.

"I could kill those people," said Corinne. "They're always hours late anyway, and they finally phone from Winnetka that they've broken down." She tamped out a nice long two and one-half inch cigarette butt until it was twisted and grub-like. "Why don't you sic your Woman in Gray on them for me?"

"I would, but I don't hate them. I

don't want them to turn over like the Quarrys," Bill answered.

"How well do you know them?"

"Not very well."

"Well, I can tell you some things. They've named their children 'Peggy Jean' and 'Michael Peter'; they have some name for their car; they go to the circus every year and laugh and laugh and eat crackerjack and peanuts—that's the kind of people they are."

"Oh well," said Bill, "I'd just as soon hate them myself. Sure, I'll send the Gray Woman after them—only they'd better look out."

That was the last they thought of it until dinner was nearly over, and Corinne was called to the telephone. She came back white.

"It was they," she whispered. "Terrible accident; a taxi hit them. Don't tell anybody for a minute."

"Were they badly hurt?" Bill asked.

"Yes."

He wondered suddenly if he ought to say anything about the absurd conversation regarding the Gray Woman. He decided not. Two coincidences were just a little too much. He knew there was nothing in it—hadn't he made her up out of a clear sky, just to amuse a guest of Sarah Carter? But, just the same, he felt it would be a little much to allude to it. However, Corinne soon saved him the trouble.

"Never mention that Gray Woman again," she said. "Never, never, never, never."

"Oh, that didn't have anything to do with it," said Bill. "You know that."

"Well . . I do. But it's a little too strange, that's all—as if Santa Claus should suddenly come down the chimney."

"Or you'd find a baby in a cabbage."

"I think that would be a great improvement," said Corinne. "But this isn't any time to be funny. I'll tell them now and start the shrieks."

So Bill's Woman in Gray story became even more famous. "It's the funniest thing," people said; "somebody ought to send it in to the *NEW YORKER*. And, you know, Bill

is such a scream about it—he's afraid to hate anybody, he says, for fear she'll get after them—and he's going to rent her to the Government in the next war."

But Bill didn't think he was funny. He thought this, while not exactly playing with fire, was at least in bad taste. He didn't think he was in very good taste, anyway, for about this time he had a bad week; seven nights of drinking and running around town, cashing checks, all the time with a low wormish feeling of approaching reckoning under all the talking of nightly parties to get rid of yesterday's hangover. And every day down at the office getting blearier, going to the water cooler with the aspirin bottle in his hand and standing blindly in the window when the terrible eleven-thirty nausea swept over him in waves. But he didn't know what to do, because life didn't have much meaning, anyway, and he was having a better time than most people.

One warm night—it was the next Monday—he sat in his room, alone. The window was open, on blackness, soft and flecked with gold. The curtains were limp; his electric fan turned its flat face wearily from side to side, stirring up an ineffectual commotion in the air. A bell rang; he answered.

"Mr. Jacobson to see you."

"Tell him to come up."

What could he want, Jacobson from the office, whom he hardly knew, unctuous and self-righteous? The door-bell buzzed.

"Come in. Good evening, good evening."

Jacobson came in and sat down. "Warm, isn't it?"

"Terribly."

"You probably wonder why I am here." Jacobson's mouse-like eyes took in the empty highball glass; the bowl of melted ice.

"Well," said Bill, "I do. Want a drink?"

"Thanks, no. Never touch it."

"Oh. O.K."

"What I wanted to see you about is this—Mr. Selfridge asked me to have a little talk with you—a friendly chat, merely, between friends."

Bill looked at him. "Yes?"

"It's about your work. A word to the wise, as it were." "Oh. Have I been lying down on the job? Going to get the gate?"

"Oh, no; not that. But first, perhaps a trifle. A little too many parties—eh? Mr. Selfridge thought that just a quiet tip from a friend . . ."

Bill was reminded of the smile of a snake. "I see," he said. "Thank you."

"Oh, not at all—not at all. It's a pleasure."

"I don't doubt it."

"Oh, I didn't mean that! Well, I'll be running along." Jacobson got up. "Nice little place you have here."

"Yes," said Bill. "I like it." (How he hated the man! Why didn't Jacobson go?)

"Well, I'd better go now. I've got a new Chevy downstairs and I have to go so slow it'll take me a while. I live in the suburbs, you know."

"Oh, you do? You have? How do you like it?"

"It's a fine little bus. You can see it from the window."

"I'll look out. Good-night. See you tomorrow."

"Good-night." And Jacobson was gone.

That ass and his Chevy, thought Bill. *I wish—*

He went to the window and looked out. Presently Jacobson came out, climbed into a little yellow car with a black patch on top, started out, and drove straight into the side of a big truck that had swung around the corner, with a horrible ripping and glassy noise.

"Good God!" said Bill.

He waited until he saw people, like sudden ants, flocking; then he came back, mixed himself a highball, and sat down on the couch. It had happened again. And just after being told about his job. Everything he did seemed to be wrong. And it was all his own fault. He gulped down his drink and made another, stronger. The light seemed so bright, and made the room look so empty, with only those two black holes of windows, that he turned them out, and sat in the single ray that came from the bathroom.

When the lights were cut. the room changed; the black windows became, gradually, a soft warm blue, like a promise of day to come. It was the room that was dark. But Bill just sat there, tapping his foot to some radio music that drifted in. Then he spoke out loud, "God! I hate myself!"

Then the door opened, and in came the Woman in Gray. Now, it wasn't anyone dressed up to frighten him, or his sister come to call. It was the Woman in Gray, and Bill knew it. He looked at her steadily as she came nearer, quietly, delicately. He felt his brains run down the inside of his skull like melting drug-store ice; the room started to rock, and then to swirl faster and faster. Finally she was halfway across the floor. He threw his glass at her. It smashed against the opposite wall.

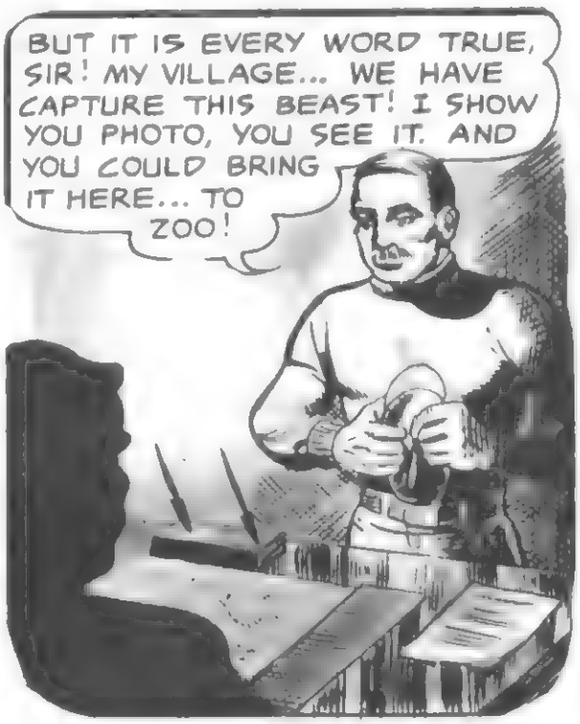
Bill stood up and whirled around—the whole room was swinging in a grayish haze. He turned to the window.

They found him the next morning, on the second-floor fire escape—one of those horizontal ones, with a weight on the end. He had landed almost in the middle, and was doing a ghastly little teeter-totter. ●

PIT OF HORROR

HOBBIES ARE INSPIRING... BUT WHAT OF A MAN WHO COLLECTS VICTIMS TO DIE?

ZOO DIRECTOR JOHN SARTAIN WAS A MILD APPEARING FELLOW, A MAN WHOSE KEENEST DELIGHT WAS TO ADD A NEW AND RARE SPECIMEN TO HIS COLLECTION! BUT WHEN THE TINY CRETAN SAILOR OFFERED HIM AN ANIMAL THAT WAS SUPPOSED TO BE EXTINCT FOR THREE THOUSAND YEARS...



THUS BEGAN MONTHS OF FEVERISH PREPARATIONS AS DIRECTOR SARTAIN SUPERVISED CONSTRUCTION OF A HOME FOR HIS NEW ACQUISITION...
LOOK, PAUL — YOUR MEN ARE TAKING TOO LONG! WE ONLY HAVE THIRTY-SEVEN DAYS LEFT!
DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT, JOHN. THEY'LL FINISH WELL AHEAD OF TIME!

AND LATER...
ONCE IT'S HERE, I'LL HAVE TO GET RID OF PAUL. HE HE KNOWS THE PLANS OF THE LABYRINTH TOO WELL.

BUT JOHN'S THOUGHTS WERE INTERRUPTED BY AN INSISTANT KNOCKING AT THE DOOR...
WHO COULD IT BE — AT THIS HOUR? I DIDN'T INVITE ANYONE.

WHY, PAUL! WHAT A PLEASANT SURPRISE... I WAS JUST THINKING ABOUT YOU. COME IN — COME IN! WE HAVE A FEW THINGS TO TALK ABOUT!
THE FOOL! HE COULDN'T HAVE PICKED A BETTER TIME. I'LL GET RID OF HIM TONIGHT!

YES, PAUL — I'M VERY GLAD YOU CAME OVER...
I'M ALSO GLAD THIS DAGGER WAS HANDY!

GOODBYE, PAUL! IT'S BETTER THIS WAY... YOU MIGHT HAVE FOUND OUT WHAT THE MAZE YOU BUILT WAS FOR!

ALMOST EFFORTLESSLY THE MAD DIRECTOR CARRIED HIS GRISLY BURDEN TOWARDS THE ZOO GROUNDS, A GHASTLY PLAN TAKING FORM IN HIS TWISTED MIND...
IT'S GOOD THAT THERE ARE NO GUARDS AROUND. I'LL HAVE TIME TO DISPOSE OF THIS FOOL!
AND THERE... IN THE ANIMAL COMISSARY WAS ENACTED A SCENE... SO HORRIBLE, SO FRAUGHT WITH UNSPEAKABLE SHAME AS TO DEFY DESCRIPTION!
HA-HA! MY GOOD CATS WILL FEAST TONIGHT... AND THEIR MUTTERING TELLS ME THEY KNOW!
AND THAT NIGHT THOSE WHO LIVED NEAR THE ZOÖLOGICAL GARDENS WERE DISTURBED BY THE STEADY SNARLS AND GROWLS OF THE BIG CATS...
THE FOLLOWING MORNING, JOHN'S SATISFACTION WAS DOUBLED BY THE ARRIVAL OF A CABLEGRAM...
WONDERFUL! EVERYTHING IS READY! I HOPE MARTIN SENT ALONG THE INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE CARE OF THE BEAST...
CABLEGR
SS EPIRIUS AT SEA PM 7
ANIMAL WILL ARRIVE ON SS
RIUS TUESDAY AT 6:00 PM
CHECK MAY BE PAID TO SHIP
MASTER
MARTIN
LOWER EASY!
WELL, THERE SHE IS— IT'S BEEN A LONG WAIT... BUT WORTH EVERY MINUTE...
JOHN SARTAIN'S PRECIOUS FIND WAS SOON IN THE HUGE SPECIAL BUILDING... THE MAZE THAT PAUL HAD LOST HIS LIFE OVER... AND JOHN, AT HOME, BEGAN TO STUDY THE INSTRUCTIONS THAT MARTIN THE SAILOR HAD SENT...
IT'S NOT POSSIBLE! WHY, NO WONDER THE CRETANS SO WILLINGLY PARTED WITH HIM... BUT HOW WILL WE?
23

JOHN WAS OBSESSED... AND WHEN HE HAD FINISHED READING THE DOCUMENT OF HORROR, HE PLANNED A WAY TO SOLVE THE PROBLEM, FOR HIS NEW PET ATE ONLY ONCE A MONTH... DIET: ONE LIVE YOUNG GIRL...
MISSING MARY'
BANNER
IS THERE A MANIAC ON THE
STAR
IRD GIRL ISSING IN FIVE DAYS
ANOTHER VICT
OF T
AT POLICE HEADQUARTERS..
GENTLEMEN, EACH OF THESE X'S IS THE PLACE THAT SOME GIRL HAS VANISHED IN THE LAST FORTY DAYS...THERE IS NO PATTERN WE CAN SEE!
YOU'LL EXCUSE ME IF I SEEM TO DIFFER WITH YOU, INSPECTOR, BUT IT APPEARS THAT ALL OF THESE 'ABDUCTIONS'—OR WHATEVER THEY ARE, TOOK PLACE FAIRLY CLOSE TO CENTER PARK! IT MIGHT TIE UP WITH THAT MISSING ARCHITECT!
MEANWHILE, AT THE ZOO..
WELL, MISS JANUS, WHAT BRINGS US THIS UNEXPECTED PLEASURE?
FRANKLY, JOHN, I'VE BEEN ASKED BY THE BOARD TO CHECK ON THIS NEW ANIMAL. THEY'RE CURIOUS, AFTER ALL. YOU'VE SPENT OVER 120 THOUSAND DOLLARS ALREADY!
REALLY, JOHN: THEY'RE MOST ANXIOUS TO SEE IT!
WELL, DEAR, YOU KNOW OUR RULES. ANY NEW ANIMAL IS LEFT ALONE FOR SIX MONTHS! IN THIS CASE I CANNOT LET ANYONE IN FOR AT LEAST ANOTHER TEN DAYS!

BUT, JOHN, I'M AFRAID THAT I MUST INSIST... YOU SEE, I'M LEAVING TONIGHT FOR A TOUR, AND I WANT TO SEE THIS FABULOUS "WHATEVER IT IS" BEFORE I GO!
MISS JANUS, I HAD HOPED TO AVOID THIS... BUT SINCE YOU, AND THE BOARD INSIST, I WILL LET YOU SEE OUR NEW PET!
YES, HE'S WORTH EVERY PENNY WE SPENT! FOR IN ALL THE WORLD, THERE IS ONLY ONE MINOTAUR!
JOHN, WHAT'S COME OVER YOU? YOU'RE HURTING ME!
NOW YOU'VE SEEN HIM! BUT THERE IS MUCH TO SAY ABOUT MY BEAUTIFUL PET!
YES, MY DEAR! HE IS LOVELY, AND YOU—WHO ARE ALSO VERY LOVELY SHALL BE HIS WHEN THE FULL MOON RISES! FOR WITHOUT A HUMAN OFFERING THAT NIGHT, HE WOULD LEAVE THE LABYRINTH— AND KILL!

AT THE POINT OF A GUN, MISS JANUS FOUND HERSELF GOING DOWN A FLIGHT OF STAIRS... THAT OBVIOUSLY LED TO THE MAZE...
JUST GO STRAIGHT AHEAD, MY DEAR— STRAIGHT AHEAD!
MEANWHILE...
OKAY, SERGEANT— GET ME OVER TO CENTER ZOO. LET'S HAVE A TALK WITH THAT DIRECTOR...
I CAN'T GET OVER AN UNEASY FEELING THAT THE ZOO TIES IN SOMEWHERE WITH ALL THESE MISSING PEOPLE!
IN THERE!
OH! THESE ARE ALL THE MISSING GIRLS... OH, JOHN! IT'S BEEN YOUR DOING! WHY HAVE YOU DONE THIS DREADFUL THING?
YOU SHALL ALL EVENTUALLY BE BRIDES TO MY LITTLE PET...
HAH-HAH...TOO BAD... BUT HONEYMOONS WITH MINOTAUR HAVE A STRANGE TENDENCY TO BE FATAL!
ARGG-G!

THE DETECTIVE ARRIVED... TO FIND A DESERTED OFFICE...
I'D SWEAR I HEAR VOICES! BUT WHERE ARE THEY COMING FROM?
W-WHY, THERE'S A FALSE PANEL IN THE WALL! IF I CAN GET IT OPEN IT MIGHT SOLVE THE CASE...
EXERTING ALL HIS EFFORT, THE ANXIOUS MAN PULLED ON THE THIN CRACK IN THE WALL...
AT LAST IT'S OPENING!
IT WAS THE FACE OF A MADMAN THAT CONFRONTED HIM— THE DIRECTOR HAD BECOME THE SERVANT OF DEATH!
OKAY, MISTER— DROP IT AND START UP HERE FAST!
YOU FOOL— DO YOU THINK I'VE RISKED MY LIFE JUST TO LET A DUMB COP STOP ME NOW?
LOOK OUT! THAT CREATURE'S LOOSE!
BEFORE THE DETECTIVE COULD FIRE, THE MINOTAUR, HORROR OUT OF THE ANCIENT PAST— CHARGED!
I'VE GOT TO KILL IT... BUT IT'S TOO LATE TO HELP THE DIRECTOR NOW!
AGGGGG!
HA-HA-HA-HA-
YES... TOO LATE! JOHN SARTAIN'S LITTLE PET BROUGHT HIM SOMETHING HE HADN'T BARGAINED FOR... A PAIR OF HORNS THAT HAD BEEN SHARPENED THROUGH THE CENTURIES BY DEATH!
The End

Witchcraft

SHE FOUND IT... HIDDEN IN A SECRET CREVICE! IT SHOWED HER THE WAYS OF THE EVIL, BLACK ART THAT WAS

BOIL, BREW!! SEND YOUR DEADLY FUMES ACROSS THE AIR TO KILL, KILL! KILL!! HEHEHEHEHE!!

ABIGAIL, GET THESE BOOKS TO THE STACKS AND BE QUICK ABOUT IT!

YES, MISS SIMMONS! RIGHT AWAY...

WHY IS EVERONE AGAINST ME? WHAT HAVE I DONE TO THAT WOMAN?

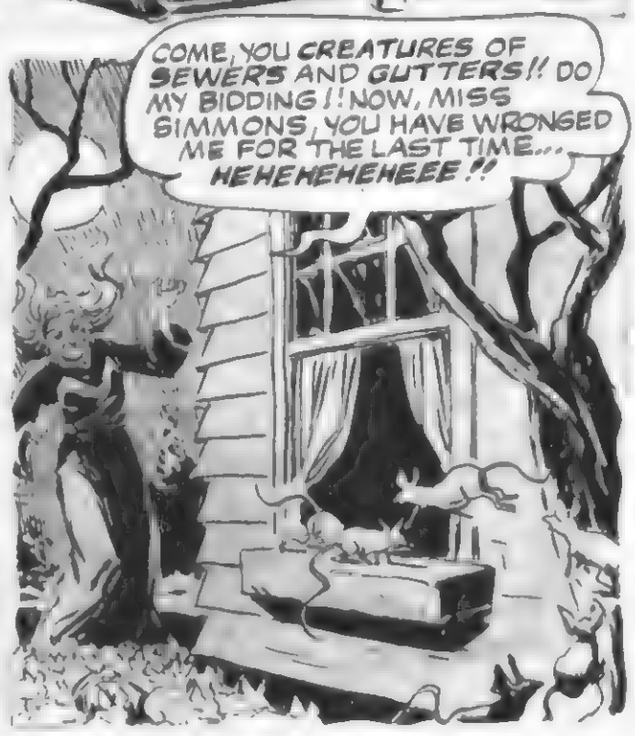
HER MIND A MIXTURE OF HATE AND FEAR, ABIGAIL MAKES HER WAY THROUGH THE GLOOMY, UNUSED STACKS! THEN...

WHY... WHY, A DOOR IS OPENING! IT OPENED WHEN I TOUCHED THIS DUSTY BOOK ON WITCHCRAFT!

A SECRET ROOM! I--I'M GOING IN! I FEEL I MUST

ONTO THE SECRET ROOM WENT ABIGAIL...
THIS ROOM MUST HAVE BEEN A WITCH'S DEN... CAN IT GIVE ME REVENGE?

ABIGAIL'S APPEARANCE CHANGES AND HER BRAIN KNOWS ONLY THE SINISTER, BLACK ART OF DEALING CRUEL DEATH!
CHELIDAR, YDARB MAILLIM... RISE, RATS! HELP ME, OH EVIL SPIRITS! REVENGE... REVENGE!

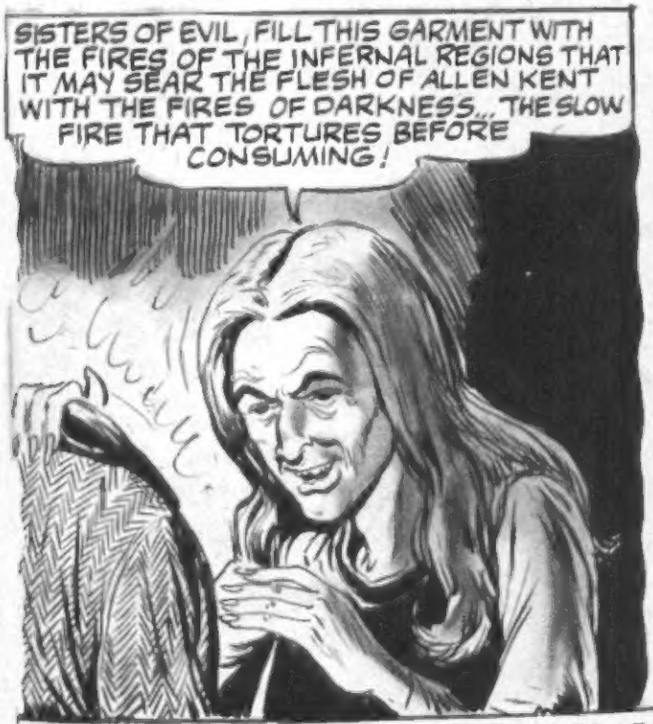

COME, YOU CREATURES OF SEWERS AND GUTTERS!! DO MY BIDDING!! NOW, MISS SIMMONS, YOU HAVE WRONGED ME FOR THE LAST TIME... HEHEHEHEHEEE!!

AT THE BIDDING OF THEIR EVIL MISTRESS, THE SLIMY RODENTS APPROACH THE SOFT SLEEPING BODY OF THE HEAD LIBRARIAN...
EEEEEE!!! HELP!! HELP!! NO-- NO-ooo!!

HE-HEEE!! REST WELL, DEAR MISS SIMMONS! HEE-HEH-HEE!!

WE CAN'T UNDERSTAND HOW MISS SIMMONS MET HER TERRIBLE END!
WELL, ABIGAIL, YOU'RE THE HEAD LIBRARIAN NOW!
PLEASE, (SOB--SOB) I DON'T WANT TO TALK ABOUT IT! MISS SIMMONS AND I... WE HAD GROWN SO CLOSE TO ONE ANOTHER! (SOB)
MISS RUBINS

REVENGE NOW SEARED THE WARPED MIND OF ABIGAIL!
NOW, ALLEN KENT, FOR BREAKING OUR ENGAGEMENT TO MARRY SOMEONE ELSE YOU WILL RECEIVE MY WEDDING GIFT!


SISTERS OF EVIL, FILL THIS GARMENT WITH THE FIRES OF THE INFERNAL REGIONS THAT IT MAY SEAR THE FLESH OF ALLEN KENT WITH THE FIRES OF DARKNESS... THE SLOW FIRE THAT TORTURES BEFORE CONSUMING!

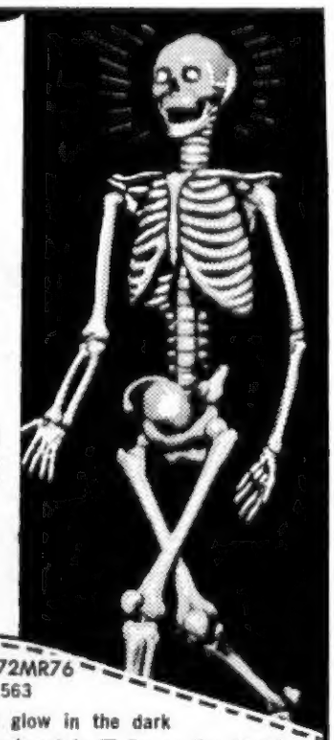
LOOKS LIKE ANOTHER WEDDING PRESENT, MR. KENT!
THANK YOU, THOMAS! IT SEEMS EVERYONE IS WISHING ME WELL!

BUT A FIERY DOOM WAS TO SPOIL THE DAY OF THE NEW BRIDEGROOM...
I--I'M BURNING UP! I CAN'T GET THE ROBE OFF! HELP!! I--I CAN'T STAND THE PAIN...

OH, NO! DARLING SPEAK TO ME!! WHAT FOUL FIEND CAUSED THIS? ALLEN, DARLING... HELP!!!

CONTINUED ON BACK COVER

MONSTER
S-I-Z-E MONSTERS



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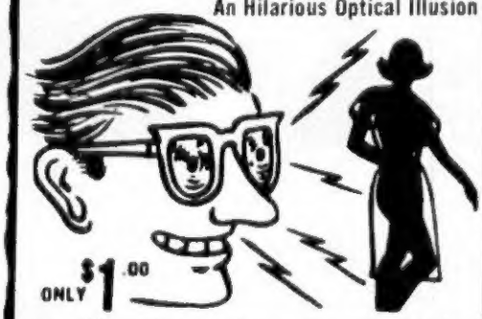

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VULTURES... EVERYWHERE YOU LOOK! WHERE DID THESE BIRDS OF DEATH COME FROM?

NOW... NOW MY HOUR HAS ARRIVED! I SHALL GIVE THE ORDER FOR THE BIRDS TO KILL!

EEEEEEEK!!! I'M ON FIRE! HELP... HELP! AR-GH-HHHH!

WHEN THE BRAIN OF THEIR FOUL MISTRESS WAS ENVELOPED BY THE EVIL FIRE, THE FESTERING, GHOULISH BIRDS BEGAN TO BURN...
LOOK! THEY'RE CATCHING ON FIRE!!

THEY'RE GOING UP IN PUFFS OF SMOKE!
THEY--THEY'RE DISAPPEARING!
THE CITY IS SAVED...

AGAIN THE CHAMBER IS LOST FROM HUMAN EYES... NOW, HOWEVER, IT HAS BECOME A VAULT... A VAULT OF A WITCH!
The END